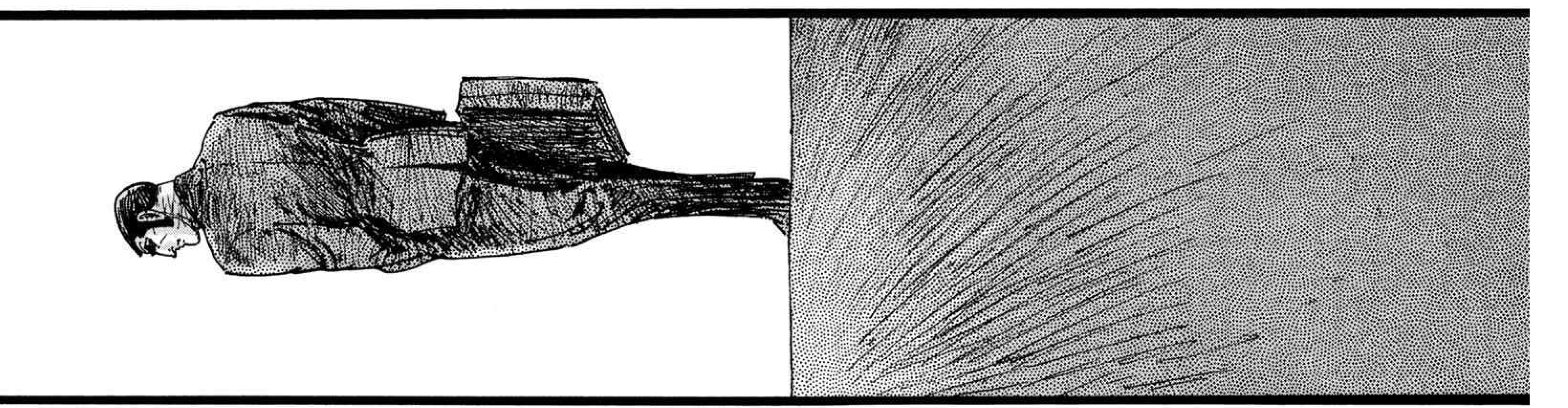
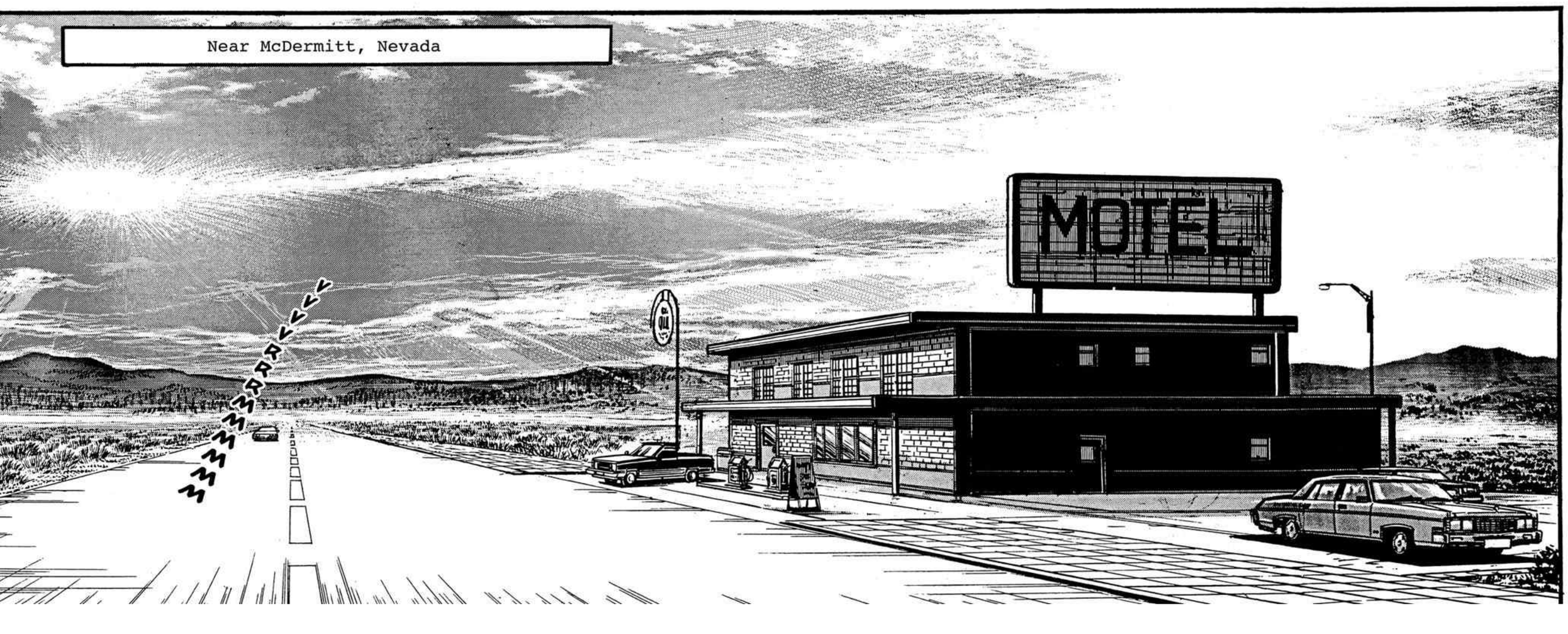
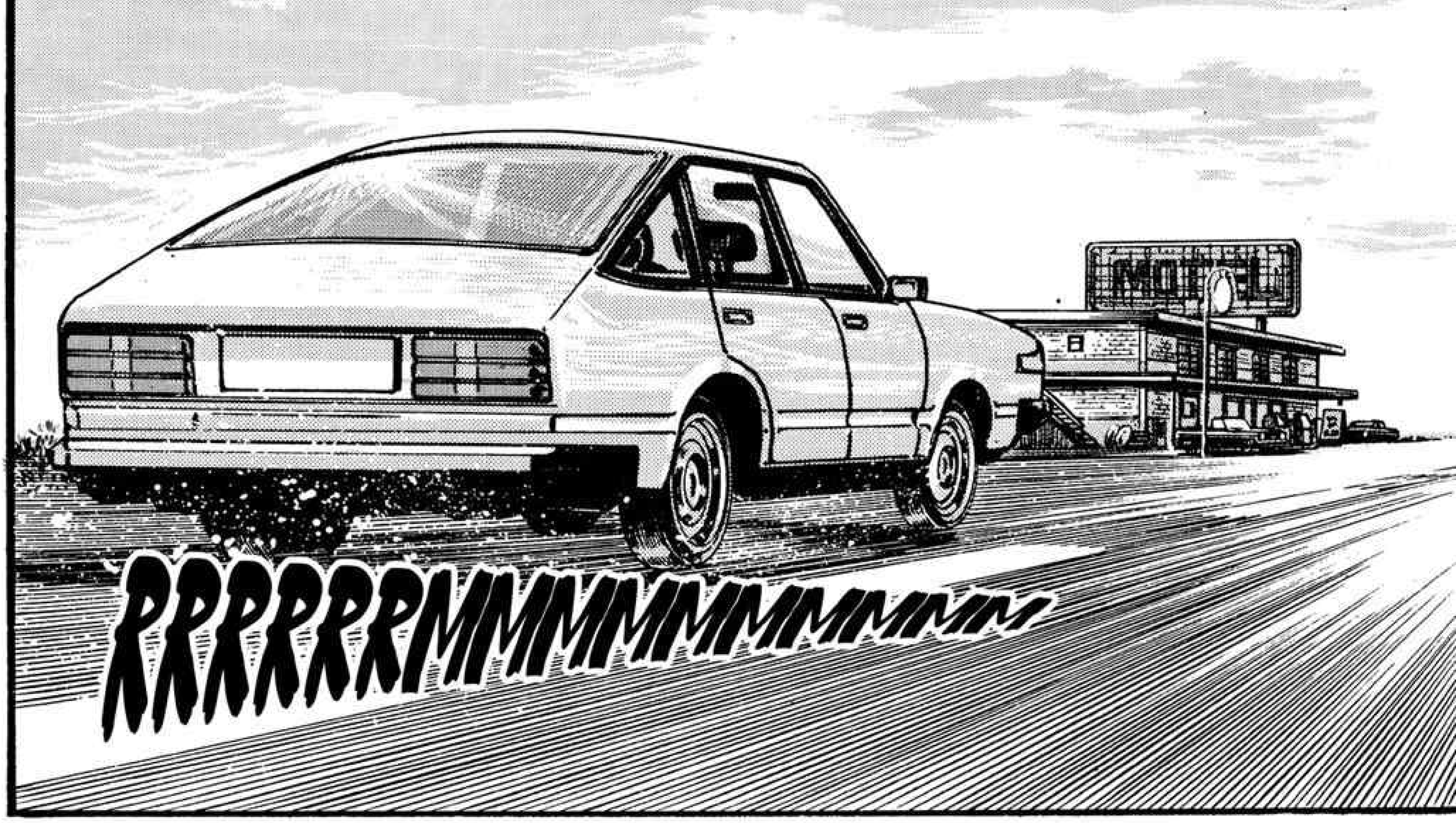
ROUTE 95

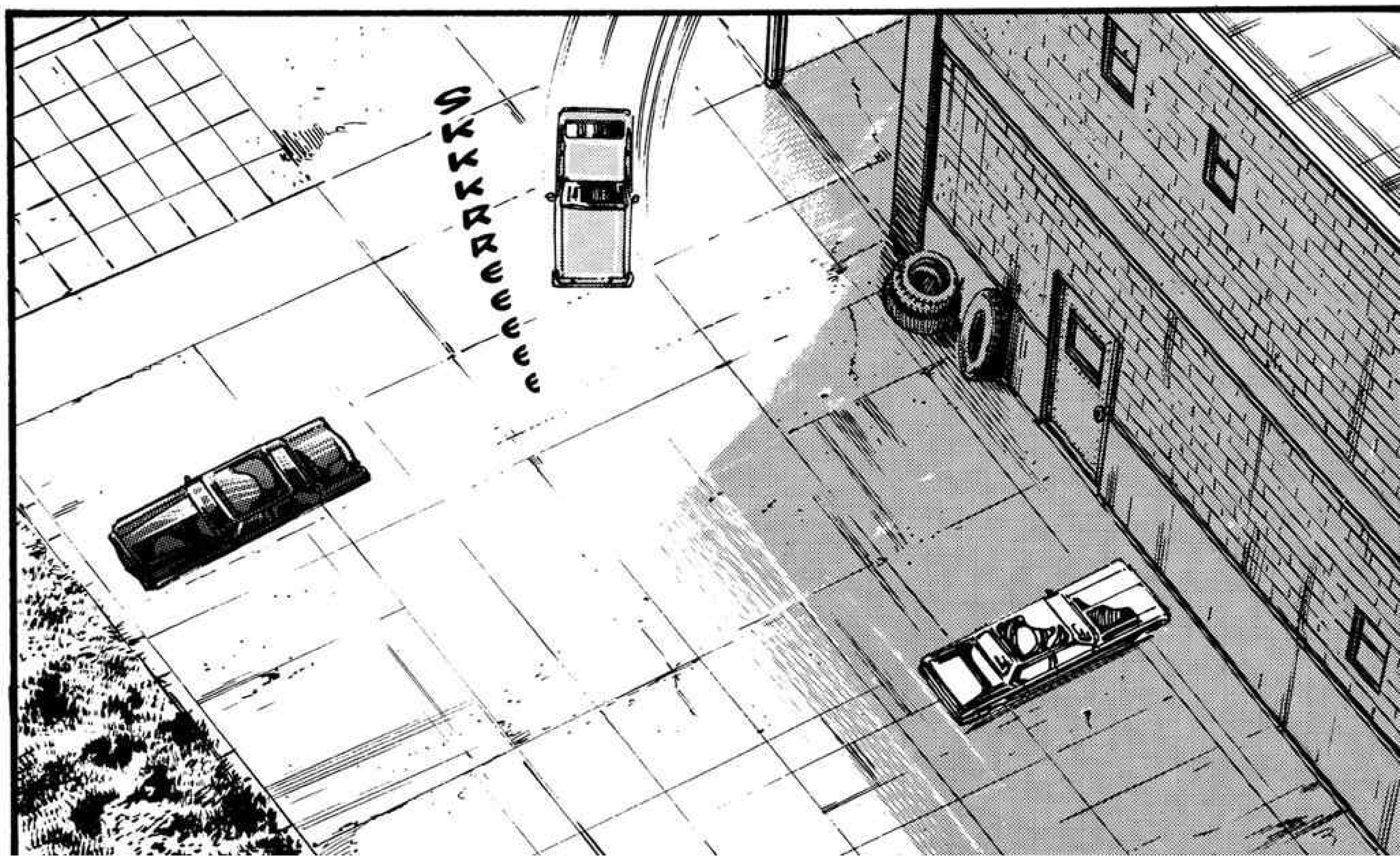


U.S. Route 95
MOTEL


Near McDermitt, Nevada
MOTEL

PART 1 SAWDUST





LADY, I'LL MAKE ROOM FOR YOU EVEN IF I HAVE TO KICK SOMEONE OUT!

ANY VACANCIES ?

ARE YOU THE OWNER ?

CHING

OH, I JUST WORK HERE. BUT THAT WOULDN'T STOP ME. NAME'S RICO, BY THE WAY.

HI!

AFTERNOON, MA'AM.

TWENTY DOLLARS A NIGHT.

DO YOU HAVE A ROOM?

!

.....

ARE YOU MICKEY FREEMONT ...?

...#6.

ROOM'S ON THE 2ND FLOOR ...

OH.

...MICHAEL WINN, MA'AM.

.....

.....

WHICH ROOM?

SIX.

adult only

YEAH, I GUESS...

WHADDYA THINK, SOPHIA?

TWO CUSTOMERS BACK TO BACK...THIS TOWN'S *BOOMING!*

YOU SHOULDN'T KEEP SOPHIA TIED UP HERE IN THE SERVICE INDUSTRY, BIG MIKE! WHY DON'T YOU FIND HER A GOOD MAN?

HEY, DAD, YOU WANT DINNER NOW, TOO?

YOU'VE GOT THE TIME TO TALK...

WHY DON'T YOU SHUT UP, VERN?

MM.

HEY, HEY, MIKE. MY MOUTH MAY BE RUNNING, BUT MY BRAIN'S ON *FIRE!*

DEADLINE'S PASSED. FOUR MONTHS AGO, AS I RECALL.

...MAYBE YOU'VE GOT THE TIME TO FIGURE OUT HOW YOU'RE GONNA PAY BACK THAT MONEY I LOANED YOU...?

.....

RIGHT, YOUR NEXT BIG DEAL.

...I'LL PAY YOU BACK WITH INTEREST!

WHEN MY NEXT BIG DEAL COMES THROUGH ...

MICKEY FREEMONT MOVED TO THE BAHAMAS WHEN HE HAD TO GET OUT OF TOWN. Y'KNOW, THEY USED TO SAY THERE WAS TWO KINDS OF ESTABLISHMENTS IN THIS STATE...

...THE CARPET JOINT...AND THE SAWDUST JOINT.

HE OWNED HALF OF LAS VEGAS! WE'VE GOT ONE BUSTED SLOT MACHINE IN THIS PLACE...NOT TOO MANY HIGH ROLLERS COME TO HUMBOLDT COUNTY.

MICKEY *FREEMONT?* YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG END OF NEVADA, BABY!

YOU'RE SAYING IT'S NOT HIM?

HOPE THE ROOM'S TO YOUR LIKING.
IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF JOINT WE GOT HERE, CHECK YOUR SHOES, BABY!

ANYTHING WRONG?

WE CAN'T BE TOO PICKY, SEE.

HIM? KEEPS TO HIMSELF, AND THAT'S FINE WITH ME!

...HE'S STAYING HERE?

YOU PROBABLY WANNA REST. BRING UP SOME DINNER FOR YOU?

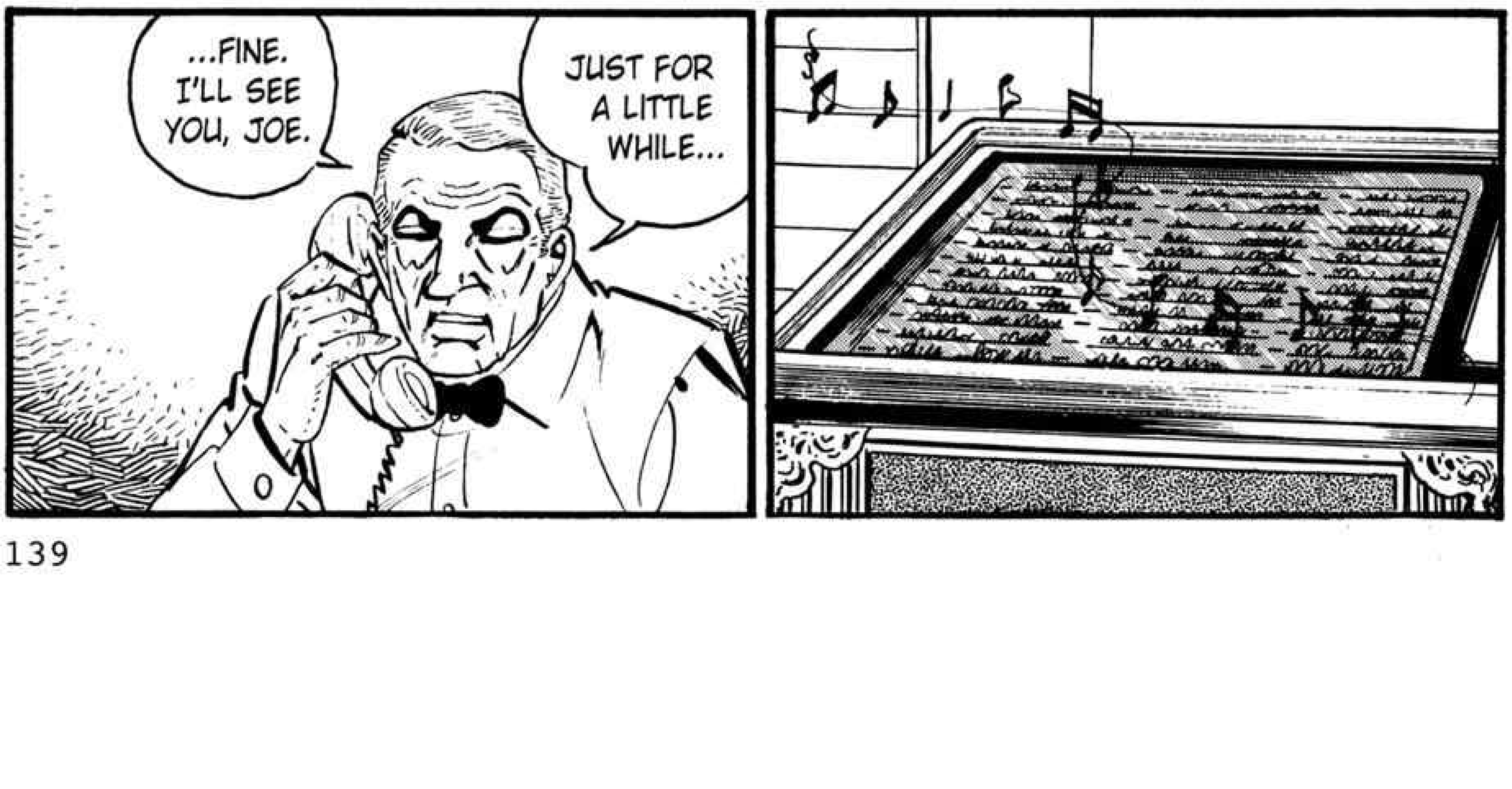
WELL, WE COULD USE A LITTLE BIT A' THAT FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN THIS TOWN, THAT'S FOR SURE!

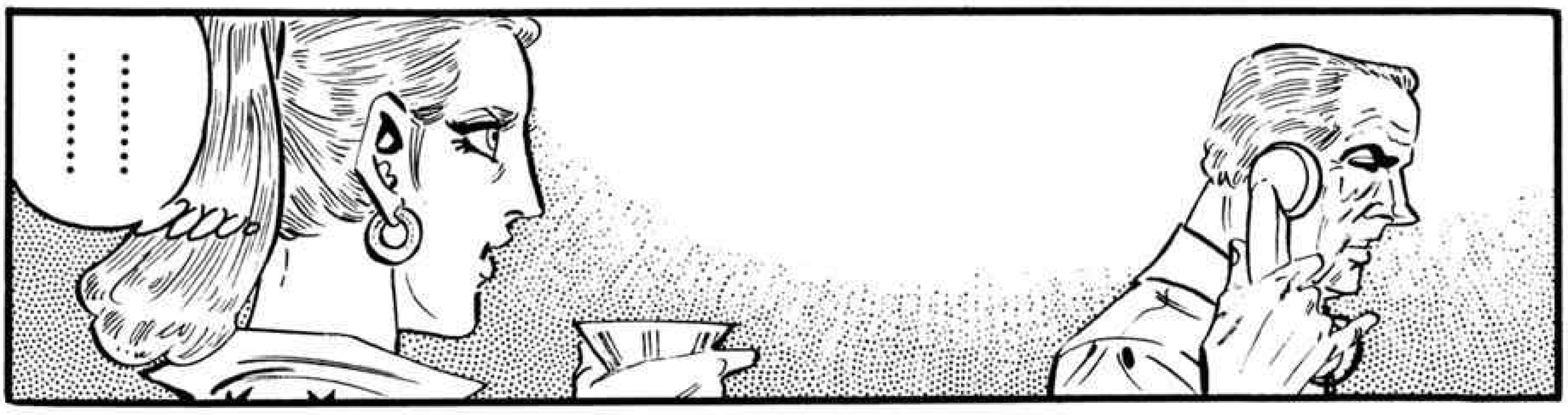
THANKS, THAT'D BE NICE, RICO.

BEEN HERE A COUPLE DAYS. POKING AROUND ONE OF THE OLD MINES IN THE AREA... SAYS HE'S JAPANESE, WANTS TO RE-OPEN THEM.

PART 2

SELF-SERVICE

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Chik

Action
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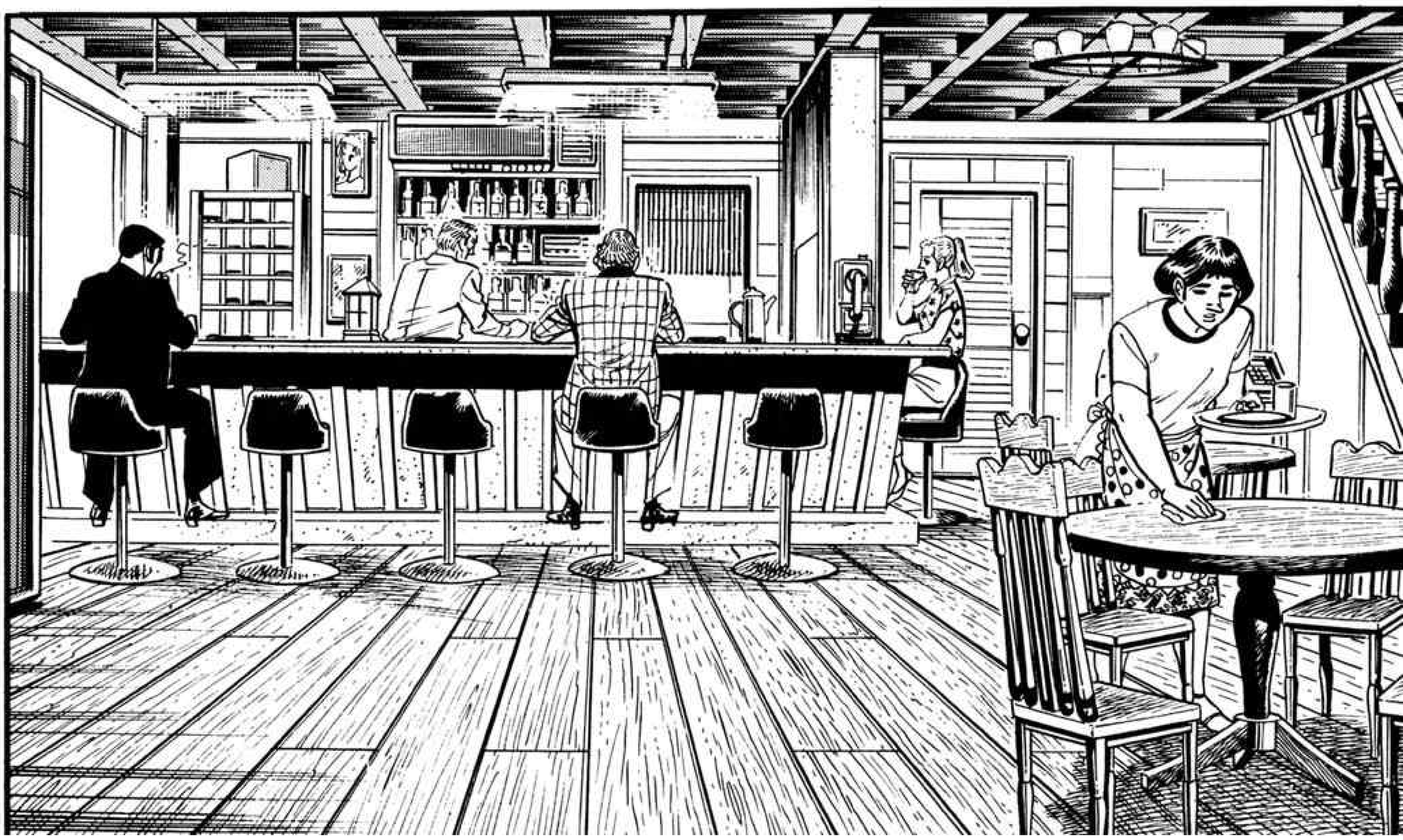


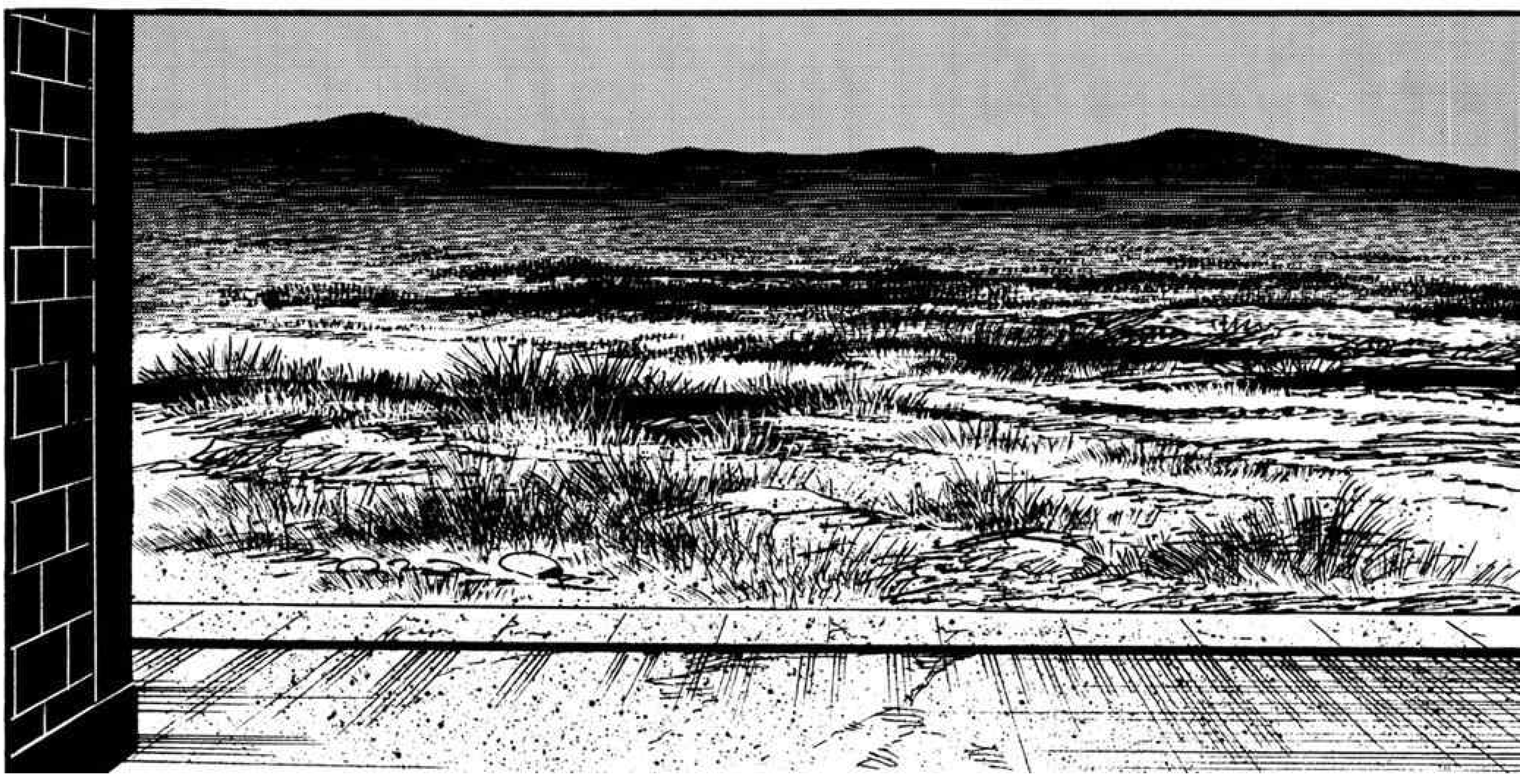
SKKKLOOCH

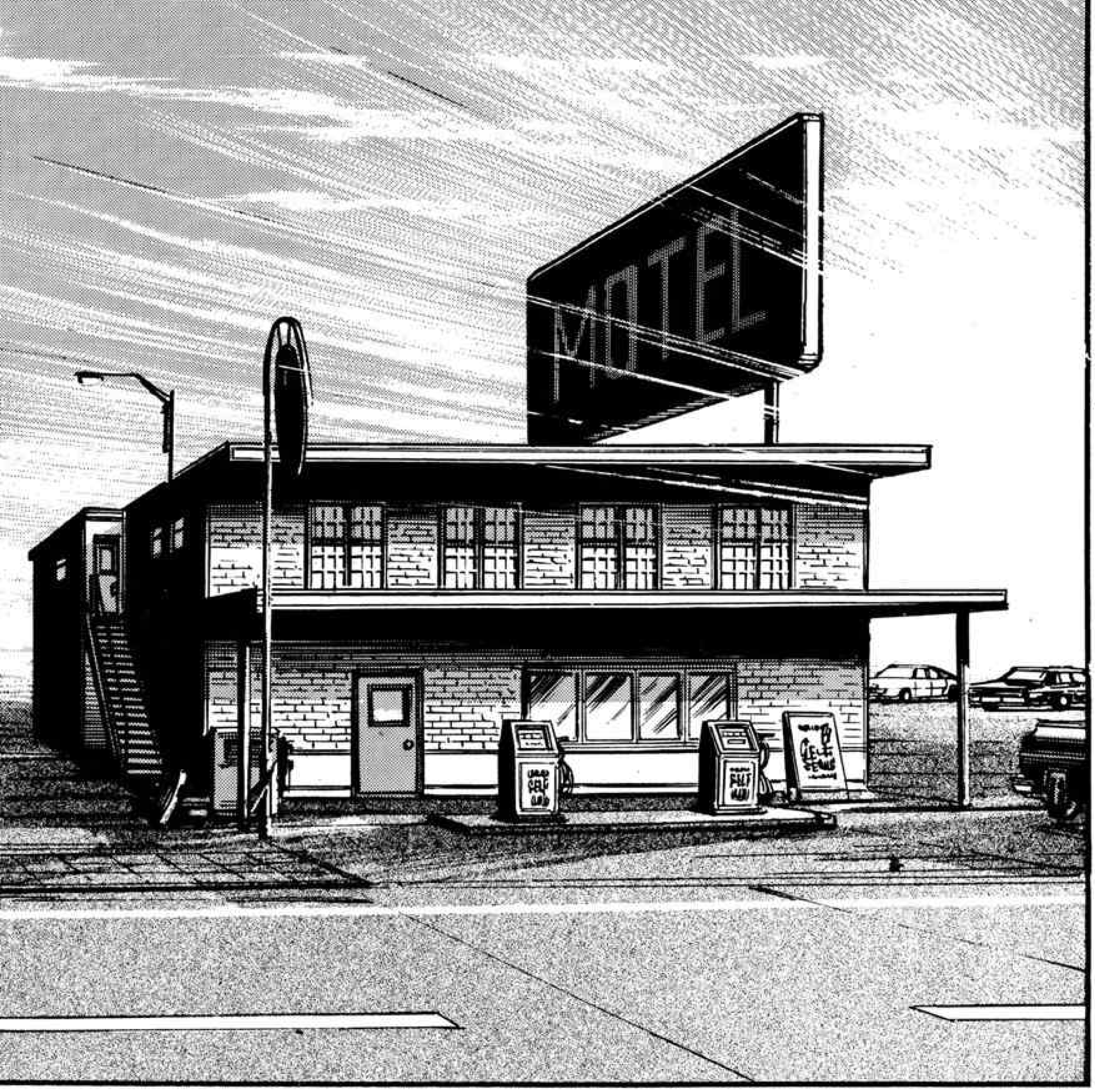
RRRRR

RRRRRMMMMMM

76 SELF SERVE

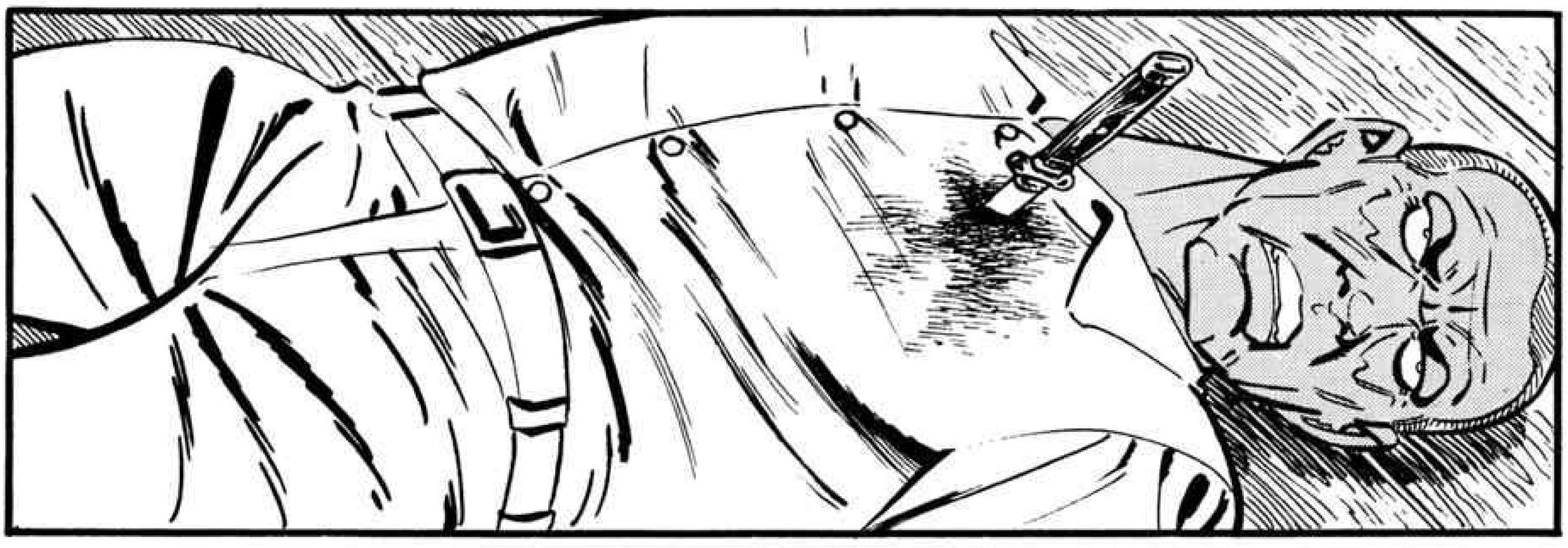
SOPHIA... WHAT'S UP...?





PART 3

DEATH IN THE MORNING



SOPHIA? WHAT'S THE--

DAD!!

OH... JESUS!

WHAT... WHAT'S GOING ...?!

M- MIKE...

OH!

MOTEL

OIL

TH...THE MONEY FROM THE TILL... THEY T- TOOK ALL THAT...

ANYTHING STOLEN, MISS WINN?

SEEMS LIKE THEY GOT IN THROUGH HERE...

WISH I DID...BUT I WAS SOUND ASLEEP...

I... I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING...

I'M GOING TO TAKE FORMAL STATEMENTS LATER, BUT IT MIGHT HELP US KEEP THE TRAIL WARM IF YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT YOU HEARD WHEN THIS HAPPENED.

PART 4

IN DRY GROUND

...AND GIVE HIM PEACE.

BUT THEN, NONE OF THIS IS.

THEY WON'T EVEN BURY HIM UNDER HIS RIGHT NAME... A HOLE LIKE THIS IS NO PLACE FOR MICKEY FREEMONT.

...L-LADY... PLEASE... I MEAN, SOPHIA...

...BUT HE'D CHOOSE WHERE TO END IT.

I WONDER IF THAT WAS HIS WAY OF TELLING HIS OLD PARTNERS THEY COULD PUSH HIM OUT, PUSH HIM AWAY...

I HEARD HE WENT TO THE BAHAMAS, TOO. BUT THEN I HEARD THIS OTHER RUMOR, THAT HE'D FETCHED UP IN THIS LITTLE TOWN. YOU KNOW, MCDERMITT'S ON THE STATE LINE...JUST ABOUT AS FAR AS YOU CAN GO WITHOUT LEAVING.

.....

...IT SEEMS HE NEVER TALKED TO ANYONE.

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN QUITE A STORY FOR MY MAGAZINE, IF HE'D BEEN WILLING TO TALK TO ME...

RRRR

UNCLE JOE!

chak

OH--I'M SORRY, SIR...
JOESPH SHERWOOD... OLD FRIEND OF THE FAMILY.

TELL ME... HOW'D IT HAPPEN?
SHERIFF, I JUST HEARD ABOUT THIS TERRIBLE NEWS... AND GOT OVER HERE TO THE SERVICE.

WHO ARE YOU, MISTER?

PART 5 THE LIGHTS GO OUT

HEY, SAM, DON'T LEAVE YET.
--WHA?!

SAMUEL CURRERI. I WANT TO TALK TO YOU.
chak
M-MY NAME'S ENRICO...

YEAH, I GUESS YOUR DAYTIME JOB DIDN'T PAY MUCH.

LOOK...I'VE ONLY GOT A LITTLE MONEY.

WELL...

WHAT... WHAT DO YOU WANT ...?

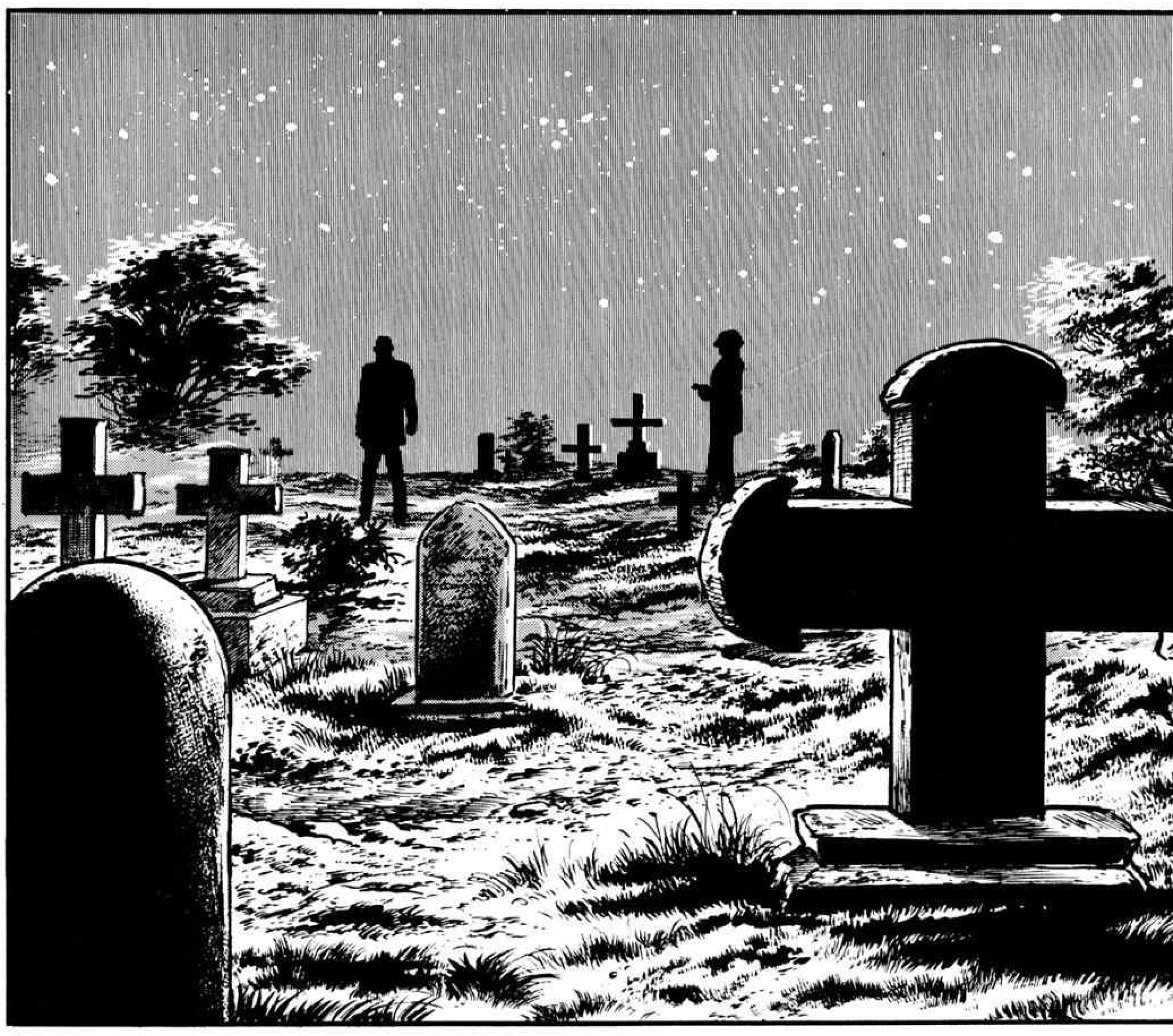
.....

...LET'S GO OUT AND SEE THE OLD MAN FIRST.

VRRR

RRRRRRRRMMMMMMMMMM

PART 6 SMALL-TIMER



DO YOU, FLICKER SAM?
JUST SO YOU KNOW...I DIDN'T MEAN TO IMPRESS YOU BY KNOWING WHAT'S ON YOUR BIRTH CERTIFI-CATE. YOU DON'T WORK UNDER THAT NAME.

.....

Mmm.

THAT'S A FLICKER SAM M.O. ALL THE WAY. NICE LONG WIND-UP, BLINK AND YOU'LL MISS THE PITCH. LAZY, SADISTIC, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO CALL IT. I GUESS YOU GET THE JOB DONE.

SO YOU TOOK A WHOLE MONTH SCRUBBING FLOORS AND CHANGING SHEETS TO GET MICKEY RELAXED...AND TO GET THINGS GOING WITH SOPHIA.

...WELL, IT DIDN'T DO HIM ANY GOOD, DID IT.

GUESS HE WANTED SOME BACKUP. HE WAS ON TO YOU IN THE END.

MICKEY GAVE ME A CALL A COUPLE DAYS AGO-- SAID THERE WAS NOTHING URGENT, BUT TO COME UP AND VISIT.

.....

Mmm.

...INSTEAD OF A KNIFE STUCK INTO IT.

YOU EITHER KEEP SWIMMING, OR YOU GET EATEN. DON'T KNOW WHAT HE WAS THINKING, HIDING IN A TOWN LIKE THIS. IF HE'D FACED THE MUSIC DOWN IN VEGAS, HE COULD HAVE HAD A NICE RESPECTABLE HEART ATTACK...

I DUNNO... I JUST CAN'T STAND TO SEE HIS DAUGHTER HURT BY A SHITHEEL LIKE YOU.

.....

Mmm.

.....

HE WAS ALWAYS KIND OF CONTRARY, MICKEY. I LIKED HIM FOR THAT. WE STAYED FRIENDS, EVEN AFTER HE LEFT THE SYNDICATE. BUT I'M NOT HERE TO AVENGE HIM... HE HAD HIS TIME.

SHIPPS

WHSSSHH

KAMMM

.....

THMP

...THEY JUST WANTED...T-TO SWEEP MICKEY UP. N-NO HURRY...

T-TRUTH TO TELL...THEY ONLY P-PAID ME TEN GRAND FOR IT...

G-GOOD OLD S-SOUTHPAW ...JOE.

...I'M DONE.

Y-YOU CAN HAVE THAT LITTLE G-GIRL BACK...

.....

...Y-YOU'RE SMALL-TIME TOO.

S-SMALL TOWN JOB...F-FOR A SMALL T-TIMER. AND NOW Y-YOU'VE SWEPT ME UP...B-BUT THAT ONLY GOES TO SHOW...

.....

WNMP

OY

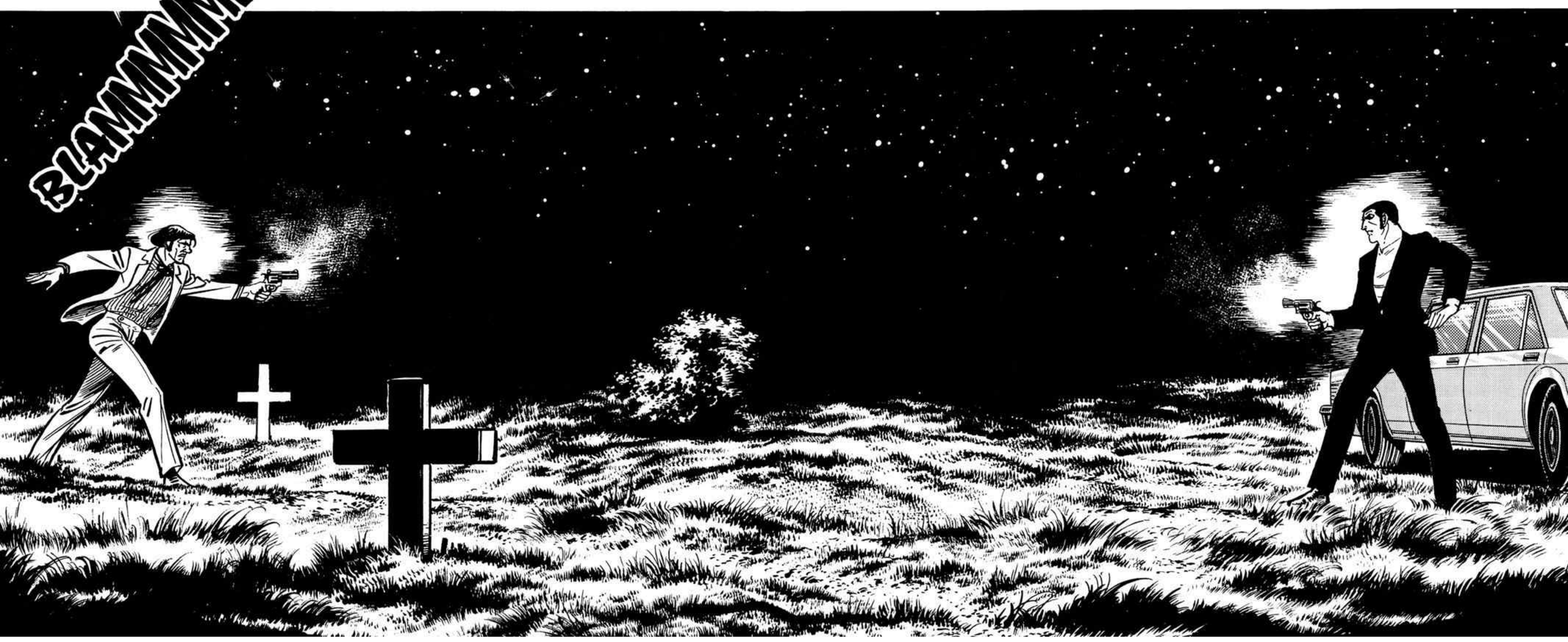
!!

WHO *DID* YOU COME TO KILL...? ME...?

THEY SAID YOU WERE A BUSINESSMAN...WHO THE HELL ARE YOU *REALLY*? I KNOW A HIT MAN WHEN I SEE ONE...BUT YOU DIDN'T COME TO KILL BIG MIKE!

BLAMMMMMMM BLAMMMMMMM

WHSHH


BLAM

...WHAT THE HELL IS *THIS*?!

WHAT...

THMP

WELL? WH-WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

OKAY, YOU WIN...SO GET *IT OVER WITH*, BASTARD!!

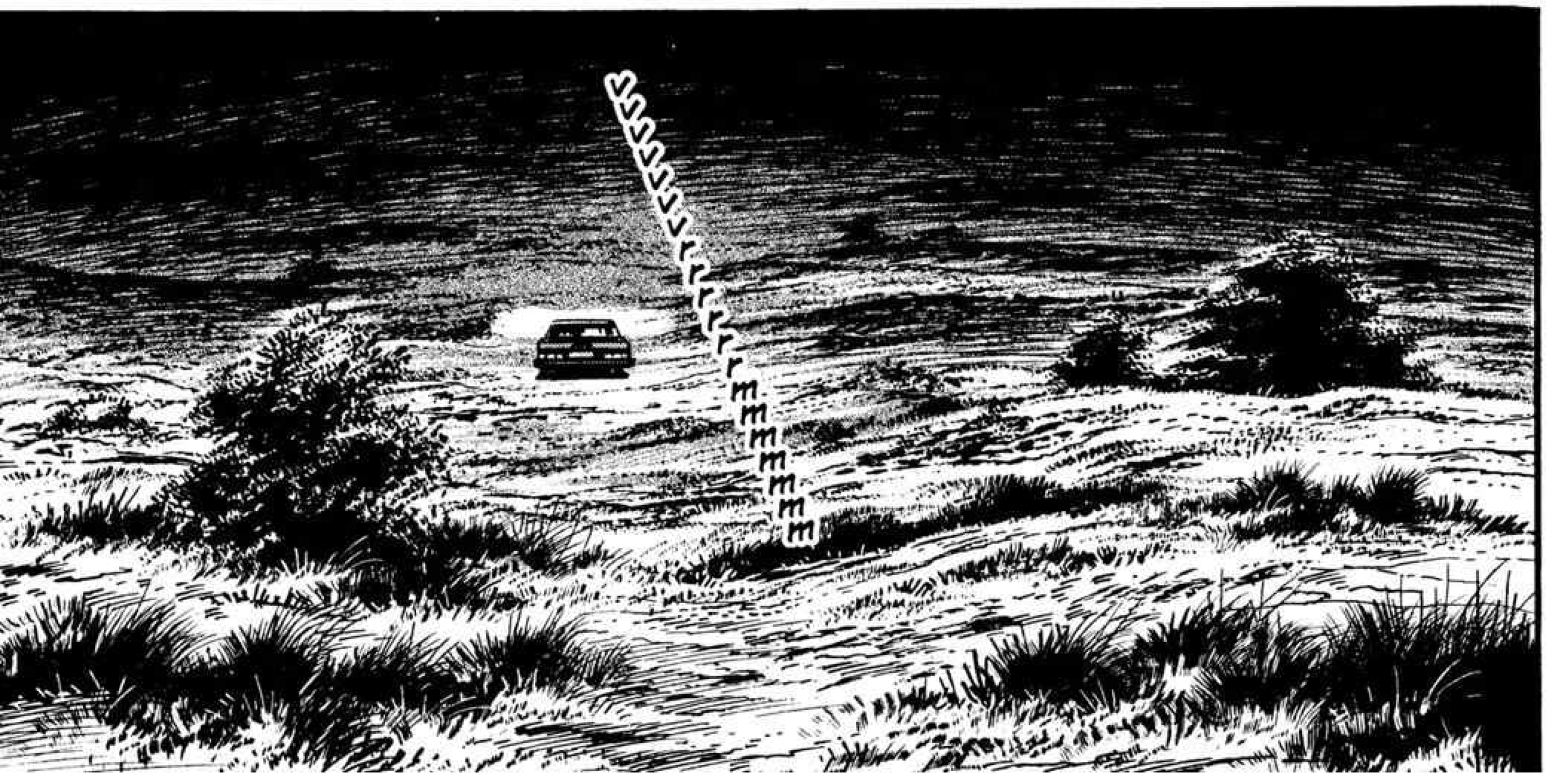
...AND NOW, NEITHER ARE YOU.

SO I'M NOT A HIT MAN...

I'M AFRAID YOU'RE MISTAKEN. I WAS ONLY PAID ENOUGH TO MAIM YOU. YOUR SKILLS ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED BY YOUR EMPLOYERS.

.....

THMP


VVVV

WH-
WHERE DID
EVERYBODY
GO...?!

RICO?
WHERE'D
YOU G-GO?
UNCLE JOE?
PLEASE!

...I'M ALL
ALONE.

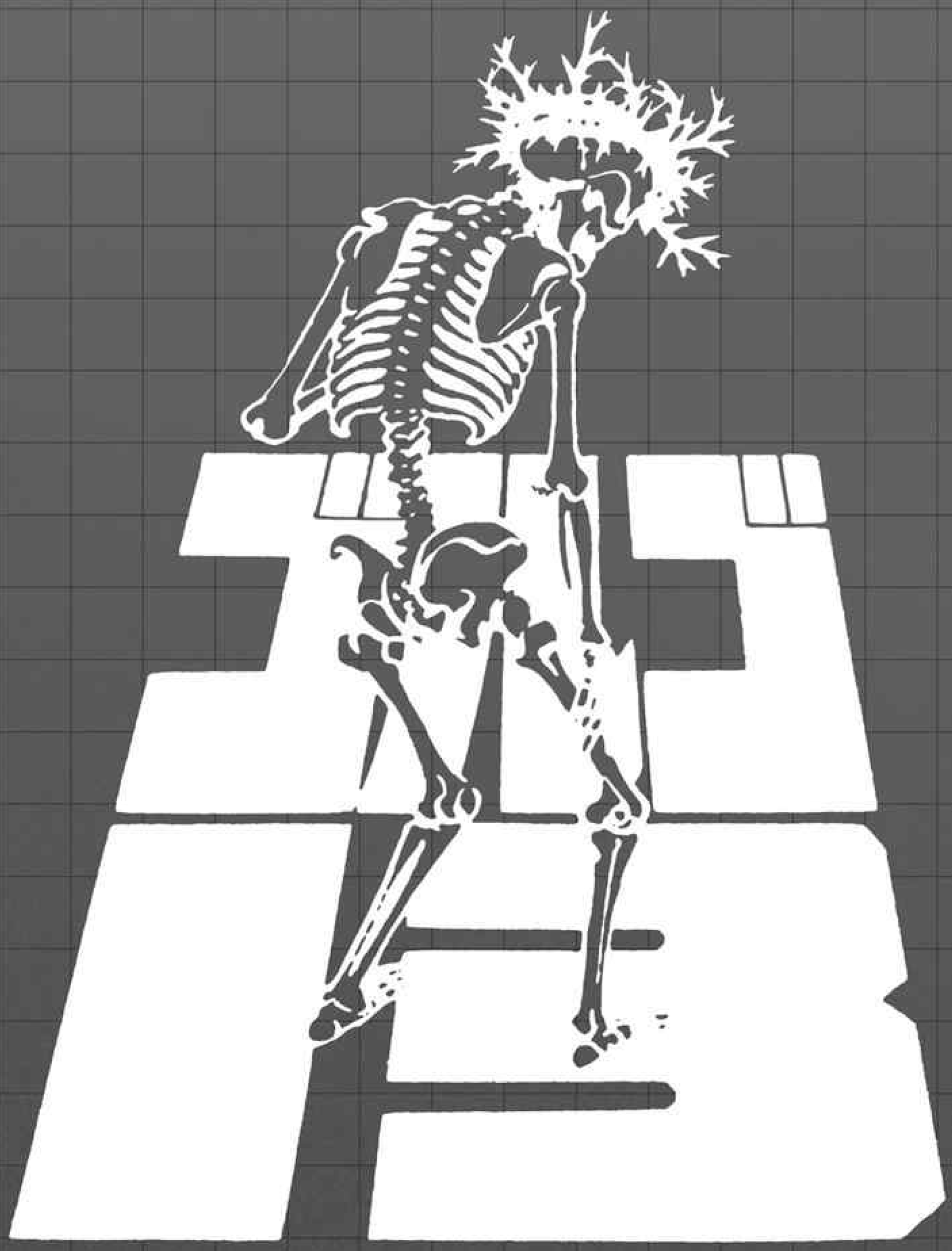
I-I'M
SCARED...

END

Route 95
Golgo 13 Story #249, April 1987

FILE 13

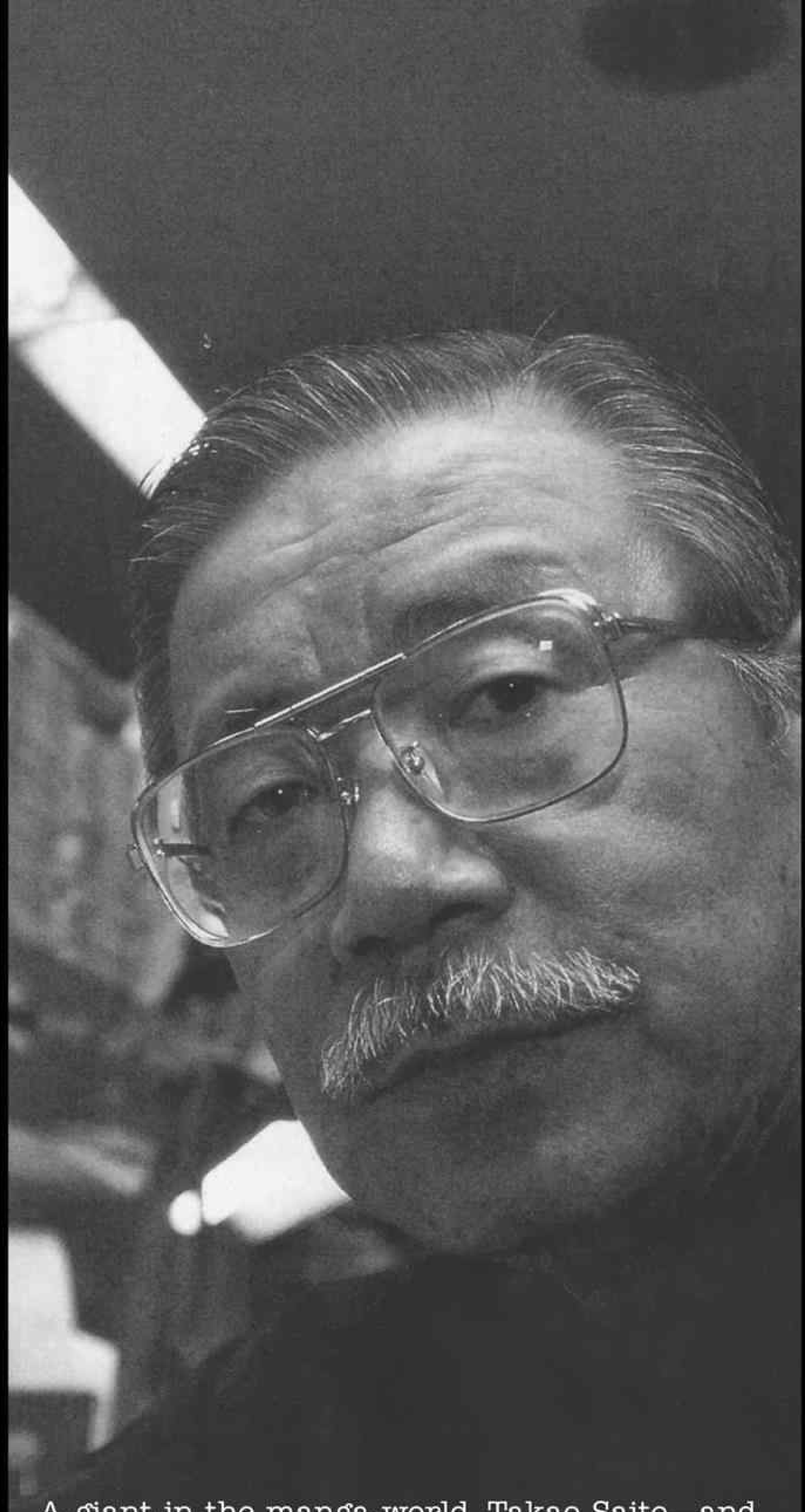
Secrets of the World's Deadliest Assassin



Summary: History and profile of **GOLGO 13** (a.k.a. "Duke Togo," other aliases) since 1968; sources include former KGB, CIA, SIS, Mossad, and other world intelligence agencies.

INTERVIEW WITH TAKAO SAITO, PART ONE

"I write with the deepest emotions put into Golgo's ....."



A giant in the manga world, Takao Saito—and the monster of the 20th century he gave birth to, Golgo 13. We look into Golgo's values, his identity, his views on life, sex, and death—and even the good and evil within his heart.

Interview by Kunio Suzuki

GOLGO 13
INTERVIEW WITH TAKAO SAITO, PART ONE

Foreword:

Golgo 13 was the textbook of my life. I learned more than international politics through it; I learned how a man should live, and how he should fight. I learned everything a man needs to know. There are many who say author and essayist Ryotaro Shiba was the largest influence among both student demonstrators on the left and right, but *Golgo 13* was actually a greater inspiration. They are just embarrassed to admit they were influenced by a manga.

I have participated in right-wing radical demonstrations, including gatherings deemed illegal. I have assaulted with the intent to kill, and have thought at times I would be killed. In situations like this, how would Golgo fight, endure, and escape...? These were my thoughts. I was Golgo. Those of you on the left were probably the same.

But in truth, neither those of us on the left or right had the courage to fight alone. We could not be "the ultimate warrior," as Golgo is. Golgo is independent from any group, country, or ideology. In many ways he foresaw the present—which means his creator, Takao Saito, foresaw it. Our conversation, conducted in 2001, begins from here.

—Kunio Suzuki

Suzuki: The first episode of *Golgo 13* was in the January 1969 issue of *Big Comic*, which actually hit the stands on November 29, 1968. So this marks 33 years for you thus far on *Golgo*. *Big Comic* was conceived as a comic magazine for a *seijin* (adults only) readership. *Golgo 13* met this concept well.

Saito: Actually, when I started this career, I only ever wanted to direct my work towards a *seinen* (late teens and adults) audience. In the end, the readers who will truly appreciate drama are adults. From the very beginning I have said that manga would take the place of popular novels in society. That was my mindset when I did *Muyounosuke* in 1967 for [Kodansha's] *Shonen Magazine*. It came about because I had been asked by the editors to do a story to try and retain those readers who might move on from *Shonen*, so I was happy. However, the name of the magazine was still "*Shonen*," so I felt I had to hold back. For example, I wanted to do these stories about Muyounosuke and a lady innkeeper. But I couldn't write those type of stories.

Suzuki: Ah, I see.

Saito: Because I felt like I had my arms and legs bound creatively, I went around trying to convince anyone I could, "Put out a manga magazine for the seinen readers!"

Suzuki: So you already had the image of a story like *Golgo 13* in your mind, and you forced the creation of a seijin magazine to run it in?

Saito: Until *Muyounosuke*, I'd never done any manga for a magazine. All my work had been for the rental book market [The 1950s *gekiga* movement from which Takao Saito arose reached its readers through hardcover graphic novel editions designed to be rented rather than bought—CGH]. I was in the rental book business until the very end of its era. The rental book audience had a higher age range. Back then I had a hard time deciding what sort of content to write. After thinking about it for a long time, I came up with the concept of a story that takes place in an unidentified country. It seems like modern-day Japan,

1979's Story #146, "La Mano Dias," and 1995's Special Edition Story #44, "GOD HAND," share a title with the same meaning.

GOLGO 13
INTERVIEW WITH TAKAO SAITO, PART ONE

Takao Saito Biography

1936 (Showa 11) Born in Asakusa, Tokyo. Youngest of five siblings. Later moves to Sakai in Osaka. A bully in his childhood. Interested in sword-fighting movies and American comics.

1950 (Showa 25) With the rental book market in boom, decides at age 14 to become a manga artist while helping out at the family barber shop.

1955 (Showa 30) Makes his professional debut at age 19 with *Count Air*, published through Hinomaru Bunko in Osaka, an early venue for gekiga artists. Enjoys success with other titles drawn for the rental market.

1958 (Showa 33) At age 22, moves back to Tokyo.

1959 (Showa 34) One year later, forms the "Gekiga Atelier" with seven people, including Yoshihiro Tatsumi, Masaaki Sato, and Fumiyasu Ishikawa. In its short existence, the studio helps to promote the idea of gekiga as something distinct from manga.

Typhoon Goro, 1960

1960 (Showa 35) The Gekiga Atelier breaks up; Saito forms "Saito-Pro" (Saito Production). The same year, his manga *Typhoon Goro* becomes a hit.

1967 (Showa 42) Saito's *Muyounosuke* is published in *Shonen Magazine*, which will serve as the inspiration for *Golgo 13*.

1968 (Showa 43) At age 32, Saito is selected to be one of the creators in the founding issue of *Big Comic*. The first *Golgo 13* story, "Operation Big Safe," reaches readers at the end of November. In the same year, he does the story "The Searching Eagle Appears!" as well as "Baron 1" in *We Are* magazine.

NEW SERIES
新連載ゴルゴ13
A new series full of creativity by Takao Saito. An action comic involving a mysterious man called "13" spanning the world!! Please stay tuned!
A notice announcing *Golgo 13*, 1968.

1976 (Showa 51) At age 40, wins the 21st Shougakukan Manga Award for *Golgo 13*. Begins a new series, *Survival*, in *Weekly Shonen Sunday* magazine (today home of *Inuyasha*—CGH). Later produces hits such as *Onihei Detective Log*, *Shadow Hunt*, and *Gekiga MADE IN JAPAN*. However, due to the stress from being a popular creator, he develops diabetes, and faces the threat of losing his vision due to a detached retina.

1996 (Heisei 8) In September, *Golgo 13* reaches its 100th volume, a distinction shared only by a handful of manga ever.

1998 (Heisei 10) In November, *Golgo 13* celebrates its 30th anniversary.

2000 (Heisei 12) Takao Saito turns 64 years old; in November, the 400th *Golgo 13* story runs in *Big Comic*. The manga has never missed an issue. If "Special Edition" episodes published elsewhere are included, there have been over 460 *Golgo 13* stories up to this point.

Golgo likes old Japanese sayings. He's been heard to utter phrases such as "Learned from the master," and "Even dogs hit sticks if they walk."

Suzuki: Do you ever practice fencing, *kendo*?

Saito: Not at all. But I've really liked jidai geki since I was a child. In fact, I can remember seeing the silent movie versions. I think the silent films had more impact.

Suzuki: I see! They can't depend on the lines. They have to reply more on expression through movement. The swordsmen from that era would be someone like Tsumasaburo Bando?

Saito: Yes. People like Bantsuma or Arakan (Kanjuro Arashi). Hakujiro Taigauchi was another. Ryunosuke Tsukigata had a very powerful aura to him. Tsukigata always made me feel the weight of the sword. For example, after slashing, his posture suggests the heaviness of it.

Suzuki: That's incredible (laughs). I didn't notice.

Saito: Let's say Tsukigata kills. After slashing, he lets the sword all the way down.

Suzuki: Because it's heavy?

Saito: As though the stroke went all the way down due to the sword's own weight...

Suzuki: I see.

Saito: He was about the only one who expressed this.

Suzuki: I heard you chose a cool and unemotional main character because there were so many "burning blood"-type heroes at the time.

but it's a place where people go around having gunfights. I called this world I had created *Action*—and then Nikkatsu just imitated me. [Nikkatsu is a famous Japanese film studio; Saito is referring to their line of so-called "Nikkatsu Action" films, of which examples available in the U.S. are 1966's *Black Tight Killers* and 1967's *Branded to Kill*—CGH]

Suzuki: I know what you're talking about. You were the first to do it?

Saito: Yes.

Suzuki: Is that right?

Saito: They stole the whole thing.

Suzuki: Is that true? Hmm.

Saito: Then people started saying "Takao Saito's gekiga is just like the Nikkatsu movies," and I started to stray away from my work since it made me feel ill. I had my target audience set from the time I started with the rental book market. The audience for these books were the baby boomers. There were a huge number of them entering adulthood in the late 1960s. I had always said we need to get right on it as publishers as these readers became adults. However, my publisher wouldn't make a move, so I was forced to look around on my own. Then Shogakukan announced they were going to publish a seinen magazine. I was so happy.

Suzuki: Until *Golgo 13* was born, there was a lot of trial and error in seinen manga, wasn't there. Did you see that the James Bond movies were popular at this time, and—since a production on that level couldn't come out of the Japanese film industry—decide to make it as a gekiga instead?

Saito: It wasn't like that. I had already *done* an actual 007 adaptation in *Boy's Life* , a predecessor of *Big Comic*. It's true that when I saw the Bond movies, I did think this would be perfect for a graphic novel. But for my studio, the license fee I'd have had to pay to Ian Fleming would have been absurd. Shortly thereafter, in a case of sheer good luck and timing, Shogakukan acquired the rights, and invited me to do the 007 project.

Suzuki: So when you did *Golgo 13* afterwards, a spy storyline like that was in your head already.

Saito: Yes, but you see, I actually wanted to do something different from that. I really like *jidai geki*, period samurai dramas. Because of Golgo's modern-day setting, people never associate that genre with me. However, when writing *Golgo*, I brought the samurai into the present. The person that is Golgo 13 is a samurai warrior. Golgo 13's movements are as though he is drawing a sword.

Suzuki: This is the first time I've heard of this.

Saito: It's easiest to make an outlaw the main character. I can depict him however I want, and make him do whatever. I am an undisciplined person myself, so I have a hard time drawing a character who is bound by a shape. This is why the main character naturally becomes an outlaw. Golgo 13 is a character I created with careful calculation.

Interviewer Kunio Suzuki

Born 1943 (Showa 18) in Fukushima prefecture. Critic. Began to participate in the Nationalist movement as a student, and established the Nationalist Movement Gathering in 1972. His writings have also gained attention from the left due to his iconoclastic approach to right-wing politics. Currently writes articles in various fields, including politics, manga, religion and the martial arts. His works include *Copernicus at Dawn* and *The Origins of North Korea*.

GOLGO 13

INTERVIEW WITH TAKAO SAITO, PART ONE

Saito: I personally don't think that I depict him as an unemotional man. It does bother me a bit that he's thought of that way. I write with the deepest emotions put into Golgo's "....."

Suzuki: Then is Golgo a passionate-man?

Saito: He's not a passionate man, but is trying very hard to be so.

Suzuki: I see! I think what we feel is Golgo as a person ahead of his time—which translates to you being ahead of your time. *Golgo 13* began in 1968, two years before the Yukio Mishima incident. It was the Vietnam era, one of intense clashes between ideologies. It took an incredibly creative mind to come up with Golgo, who is beyond things such as nation, race, religion and politics, in such a period.

Saito: It only reflects my own thoughts.

Suzuki: Was there ever a temptation to have him aid left-wing liberation movements, such as the Viet Cong?

...OR I'LL MAKE THEM VOMIT UP THEIR GUTS WITH MY FISTS!!
WHAM
DON'T THEY DARE DO ANYTHING STRANGE TO THAT CAT...
I'M OUT OF HERE!
DAMMIT, I'M GONNA GO!
THNK

▲ Takaki from *The Searching Eagle Appears!!* This main character is also unlike Duke Togo, and is very emotional.

◀ *The Searching Eagle Appears!!* was published in 1968. This story is called "Requiem at Round 10."

Meet British international spy
James Bond, 007.
The "00" signifies an agent at the elite level–who pits their life against the enemy!

◀ A spy and a skilled sniper, the profile of James Bond is similar to Golgo's, but their personalities and motivations are quite different. Interestingly, the description of "00" agents given in this promo doesn't mention it *actually* signifies a license to kill!

▲ Graphic novel of Saito's 007 adaptation, which ran in Shogakukan's *Boy's Life* between 1964 and 1967.

In the very first scene of **Golgo 13**, *he punches a prostitute in the face merely because she came up behind him. It's possible his reflexive violence may have as much to do with a brutal childhood as it does self-protection.*

GOLGO 13
INTERVIEW WITH TAKAO SAITO, PART ONE

Saito: We're the best socialist nation in the world. We're somehow a socialist country that doesn't think we're socialists. Because we never acknowledged this, we never had to have a revolution. If you work hard, you can get what you want, so in that sense we are more liberal than a country like the old Soviet Union. But, at the very basic level, we live in a socialist structure. The mold we've been poured into is socialism in its ideal form. We're what the old socialist nations of the East Bloc should have been or wanted to be but never were.

Suzuki: I see.

Saito: But they didn't think the same way as us, nor did their citizens.

Suzuki: When I was a young student, I used to think "Japan lost the war because we were under the imperial system, and were the bad guys." "The Soviet Union is great. The People's Republic of China is wonderful." There were college professors who would say in all seriousness there weren't even flies in the USSR and China. They believed this. When Vietnam came about, they said the North Vietnamese were correct, and America was wrong, end of story. That's why student demonstrations were so widespread. We were all greatly influenced by things like that. And those on the right were motivated by people like Yukio Mishima.

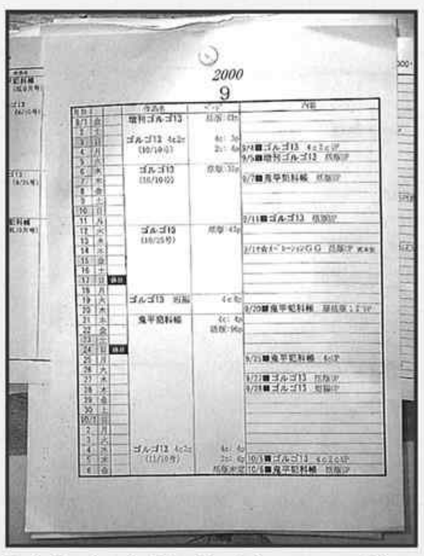
Saito: Really?

Suzuki: Yes. But you see, the right and the left were alike in this respect: they were trying to establish an ideal system under which everyone should unite. But based on my experience, I began to think that more important than ideologies and systems, is a society made of people with confidence in themselves as individuals. That you knew this back when were demonstrating for a one-size-fits-all solution amazes me.

Saito: All you have to do is stop and think about it. What's natural isn't that people are all the same, what's natural is that they're all different. And if they have all these different minds, they need to learn to use them and think with them.

Suzuki: Hmm...

Saito: Look at the difference between a "moral given" for society and the individual. Individuals are all different, yet not a one of them has the right to commit a premeditated killing. "Society" is a unitary thing, yet somehow, through war or the death penalty, it can do what none of the millions of people who comprise it would be allowed to do.



Saito-Pro's schedule chart. An average 44-page episode of *Golgo 13* will be completed in 6 days. He maintains this pace even while working on other, concurrent series.

Famous Quotes:
"Terrorism doesn't occur because I exist. Because terrorism occurs, I exist."
(Story #378, "Three Million Postcards," 1998).

Read *Golgo 13* Vol. 11 for part two of this interview with Takao Saito!

Saito: There basically haven't been any stories like that from me. I used to be asked whether I would run out of ideas once the Cold War was over, but from the beginning, the story's never been chained to that. What happened was that once the rules imposed on the world by East and West were gone, supressed issues such as religion, race, and nationality rose back to the surface. From a practical writing standpoint, it becomes harder to set up a story. Before, readers knew the rules of the game. But take an ethnic conflict. By its very nature, the rationalizations behind it only make sense to the members of that ethnic group.

Suzuki: Now, I can understand all of that, but I think it's incredible you were doing this 33 years ago.

Saito: Is that so?

Suzuki: Even if you didn't write those kind of stories, did anyone submit such scripts to you, of Golgo being used to promote somebody's worldview? Golgo helping guerillas against an evil government? Even not taking any money, killing pro bono?

Saito: Yes, I did get those kind of proposals.

Muyounosuke, who became the basis for Golgo...even though his personality is the complete opposite.

Suzuki: But you rejected them.

Saito: I rejected them without reading them. The problem is the premise. I would get left-wing scripts from writers on the left, and right-wing scripts from writers on the right.

Suzuki: You would get ultra-right scripts, too?

Saito: I remember one that was very extremist. I just couldn't use it.

Suzuki: *Golgo 13* itself is above ideologies, but in the background, it does seem you're trying to say something to Japan.

Saito: What Japan needs to think about more isn't its banks or politicians. The problem with Japan is so obvious—its societal regimentation. How could such a regimented country claim to be a liberal, democratic nation? People don't truly accept the notion of individual responsibility. Everyone's just content to let the higher-ups do things for them.

Suzuki: Are you trying to say that Japan is a kind of socialist nation?